UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/PRST/1998/32
6 November 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH, FRENCH AND RUSSIAN

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3941st meeting of the Security Council, held on 6 November 1998 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Croatia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the final report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations police support group (S/1998/1004), and in particular his description of the successful conclusion of the police support group mandate and the smooth transition of responsibilities to the police monitoring programme of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Council recalls the commitment of the Government of Croatia to ensure that OSCE police monitors will have the same access to police stations, documents and police operations, including investigations and checkpoints, as that accorded to the United Nations police support group.

"While the overall security situation in the Danube region remains satisfactory and police performance has improved notably and the Government of Croatia has taken steps to ensure that this continues, a worrying trend of ethnically motivated incidents persists in the region. The Security Council remains deeply concerned at the continuing departures of Serb residents, resulting to a considerable extent from these incidents. In this context, the Council is mindful of the importance of economic revitalization and reconstruction in creating an environment for sustained returns. The Council calls upon the Government of Croatia to make every effort to enhance public confidence in the police force and to recommit itself fully to the process of reconciliation between ethnic groups.

"The Security Council also calls upon the Government of Croatia to address the perceived lack of security which is contributing to continuing departures of Serbs from the region, and to remedy a number of problems which are preventing the full implementation of the "Programme for the Return and Accommodation of Displaced Persons, Refugees and Exiled Persons" (S/1998/589). While noting that in his previous report (S/1998/887) the Secretary-General recognized progress in the implementation of this Programme, the Council calls upon the Government of Croatia promptly and fully to address all unresolved issues, which include restitution of

property to Croatian citizens of Serb ethnicity, harmonization of legislation with the provisions of the return programme to enable non-discriminatory implementation, effective functioning of all housing commissions, equal access to reconstruction funding, restoration of rights to socially owned apartments, access to information, removal of impediments to the acquisition of documents needed for returnee status and benefits, and implementation of the law on convalidation.

"The Security Council expresses particular concern about the Joint Council of Municipalities, which represents all Serb ethnic communities in the region and which is described by the Secretary-General as being on the brink of collapse. The Council reiterates the continuing obligations of the Government of Croatia under the Basic Agreement as well as under international conventions and other agreements, and, in this context, stresses the importance of full implementation of the 'Programme for the Establishment of Trust, Accelerated Return and Normalization of Living Conditions in the War-Affected Regions of the Republic of Croatia' (S/1997/772).

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the OSCE, which has now assumed the role of the United Nations support group, and looks forward to being kept informed, whenever necessary, of relevant developments in the Danube region of Croatia.

"The Security Council expresses its deep appreciation to all the men and women who participated in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Danube region of Croatia. Their dedication and perseverance made a significant contribution to regional peace."